



Lake & Prairie

Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter

First Quarter 2004

Volume 45, No. 1

Sierra Club and Other Health, Environmental, and Consumer Groups File Legal Action to Stop Dirty Coal Power Plant

by Bruce Nilles, Senior Midwest Representative, Sierra Club

Chicago, IL— Opponents of a proposal to build a giant coal-burning power plant 55 miles south of downtown Chicago filed their first legal action recently seeking to stop the project.

The groups, including the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago, Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment (Lockport), the Clean Air Task Force, the Lake County Conservation Alliance, and the Sierra Club, argue that the state of Illinois should follow the lead of other states that are requiring modern pollution controls on new power plants.

The Indeck Corporation is seeking permission to build a power plant in the city of Elwood (Will County). With a 495-foot smoke stack and southerly summer winds, Indeck's thousands of tons of soot and smog pollution will blanket Joliet, Chicago, and points north — areas that are already in violation of federal air quality standards.

The groups filed their legal appeal of the state permit directly with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Appeals Board in Washington, D.C. The 24-page, single-spaced legal filing documents nine reasons why the permit fails to protect clean air in the Greater Chicago area. In particular, the groups charge, the permit

allows Indeck to discharge far more soot and smog pollution levels than other, cleaner power plants in other states.

"More than 70,000 Chicago-area residents are rushed to area hospitals every year," said Brian Urbaszewski, Director of Environmental Health Policy for the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago. "The State's failure to require Indeck to install modern pollution controls will mean more air pollution, more asthma attacks, and more healthcare costs for all of us."

Earlier this year, the *Chicago Tribune Magazine* reported that the Chicago area was "No. 1" in the national asthma epidemic because more of its residents die from asthma than in any other place in the U.S. An estimated 660,000 residents of the six northeastern Illinois counties suffer from asthma and are particularly at risk from high levels of air pollution.

Earlier this year, Elwood residents made it clear they don't want Indeck's unnecessary air pollution in their community. Ninety percent signed a petition opposing the project.

"Illinois deserves better than another dirty, coal-burning power plant," said Anne Kawaters, chair of the Sierra Club's Sauk-Calumet Group. "The Governor promised on the campaign trail that he

would clean up Chicago's unhealthy levels of air pollution by requiring existing power plants to clean up and new power plants to install modern pollution controls. By approving Indeck's dirty coal plant, he is breaking that promise. Consequently we have no choice but to file this legal action to protect our air."

"Illinois is lagging behind other states that are finding the balance between clean air and safe, affordable power," said John Thompson, advocacy coordinator of the Clean Air Task Force. "Illinois is allowing Indeck to use decades-old technology that will pro-

vide neither clean air nor safe power. Illinois can and must do better."

For more information about INDECK and other air quality issues, contact Bruce Nilles at 312-217-9725.

You can also find more information about dirty, coal-fired power plants at the Illinois Chapter's web site, <http://illinois.sierraclub.org>. Click on the Take Action icon on the left side of the page for background information on the INDECK situation. Keep checking the Chapter web site for updates on clean air issues.

Piasa Group Tackles Air Quality in Southern Illinois Counties Increasing Title V Permit Application Requests

Activists in the Sierra Club's Piasa Palisades Group, based in Alton, Illinois, near St. Louis, are concerned about the air quality in Madison and Jersey Counties. Both currently have non-attainment status under the Clean Air Act.

Members of the group attended two public hearings in October regarding Title V permit applications under the Clean Air Act. Activists jumped in feet first and commented on both the draft Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) permit and the draft Clean Air Act Permit Program (CAAPP) permit for Onyx Environmental Services in Saugat and Dyrnegy Midwest Generation Inc.'s Baldwin and Wood River permits.

By way of training local activists to understand and be persuasive on such complicated issues, Bruce Nilles, Sierra Club's Illinois Clean Air program director, taught an Air Quality 101 course on the air permitting, investigation, and intervention processes.

Scott Kinkelaar, a new Piasa Palisades volunteer, attended the Air Quality 101 course and became active on air quality issues. He did a great job investigating one particularly interesting plant and found a random spike in effluents. Now, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has referred the case to the Attorney General's office and is requiring the facility to go through the

permitting process and may require the plant's owners to install new emission control systems. Scott also submitted comments on two other local plants.

The Piasa Palisades Group is requesting three separate public hearings, while American Bottom Conservancy, an Illinois not-for-profit organization working to protect the resources and communities of the American Bottom floodplain of southwestern Illinois, asked for three more hearings for different corporations in the same area. Between the two groups, six of the seven most recent air applications have received attention.

The Piasa Palisades Group has been encouraging its members to assist in researching more permit applications, because all of the decisions likely will happen around the beginning of 2004.

Volunteer Opportunity in Illinois Chapter

The Illinois Chapter needs a volunteer for the position of Chapter Treasurer beginning Jan. 2004. Members in good standing interested in the position should contact Bill Davies, chapter chair, at daviesb@0sc.army.mil, or Jack Darin, chapter director, at jack.darin@sierraclub.org.

Ride the ISCAN Wave

It was awesome! Thousands of you signed up for ISCAN, the Illinois Sierra Club Action Network, in 2003!

Last spring you used it to swamp your elected officials with faxes on important environmental issues. Your faxes were critical to helping our champion legislators sway many of their undecided colleagues, winning support for our causes and passing bills we've wanted for years. We should all take a moment to feel proud of our success for the environment.

What if there was a way to accomplish even more? While ISCAN is the easiest and quickest way of contacting our poli-

cy makers, there are other ways that take a little more effort but can be even more effective. A phone call or an e-mail or letter in your own words can make a bigger splash with your elected official. (Meeting them in person and developing a working relationship are the most effective ways — contact your local group chair if you find that kind of deep diving a thrill!)

For ISCAN members who want to graduate to the next level, we've created an additional e-mail alert system. It's called IL-ALERTS.

While ISCAN members rarely receive more than two *continued on page 3*

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chicago, IL
Permit # 536

The Sierra Club
200 N. Michigan Avenue
Suite 305
Chicago, Illinois
60601-5908

Lake & Prairie
Volume 45, Number 1
1st Quarter 2004

Lake and Prairie is published quarterly by the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Production and Distribution:
Full Line Printing, Chicago, IL

Production Coordinator:
Sue Lannin

Editor and Assistant Editor:
Christine Williamson and Andy Morkes

Layout and Design:
Lisanne Freese, Graphic Design, Chicago, IL
773-792-1224

Contributors:
Jerry Heinrich, Bruce Nilles, Christine Flavilla,
John Barry, Christine Williamson

Contributions:
Send all contributions to the Chapter office. All articles receive equal consideration based upon merit. Please send articles on a disk or by e-mail. Hard copy is also accepted. Photo submissions are also very welcome. Contact the office for more information.

Editorial Policy:
Sierra Club policy and Executive Committee decisions set the overall philosophy of the Chapter and the newsletter tone. We welcome articles and letters from members and other concerned environmentalists. Opinions expressed in *Lake & Prairie* are not necessarily those of Sierra Club or the Illinois Chapter. However, *L&P* will not advocate positions directly opposed to adopted Sierra Club policy positions. Contributing authors may review their edited story prior to publication, time allowing. The editor has final say on copy. We reserve the right to condense or revise articles for space, clarity, or libel. Knowledgeable local environmentalists may be consulted for fact checking.

Subscriptions:
Lake & Prairie is sent free to all Chapter members. One dollar of annual dues is for *Lake & Prairie*. A non-member subscription is available for eight dollars (\$8). Send requests for non-member subscriptions to the Chapter office.

Advertising:
For information about advertising rates and deadlines, contact Sue Lannin at the Chapter Office, 312-251-1680.

Illinois Chapter Offices

Northern Illinois area:
200 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 505
Chicago, Illinois 60601-5908

Phone: 312-251-1680
Fax: 312-251-1780
E-mail: illinois.chapter@sierraclub.org

Chapter Staff:

Director: Jack Darin (jack.darin@sierraclub.org)
Conservation Field Representative:

Douglas Chien (doug.chien@sierraclub.org)

Grassroots organizer: Jennifer Hensley (jennifer.hensley@sierraclub.org)
Shawnee Wildlands Outings Coordinator: Terri Treacy (territreacy@yahoo.com), 618-521-1030

Office Manager: Cindy Salopek (csalopek@mindspring.com)

Administrative Assistant: Sue Lannin (sierra-club.il@mindspring.com)

Downstate (maintained by Piasa Palisades Group):
223 Market Street, Alton, IL 62002-2631
Phone and fax: 618-462-6802
E-mail: ppgsc@juno.com

Three Rivers Project Coordinator: Christine Favilla (cfavilla@ezl.com)

Next issue: 2nd Quarter 2004

Copy receipt deadline: **February 9, 2004**
Outings receipt deadline: **February 9, 2004**
Send copy by e-mail to Christine Williamson at birdchry@aol.com or to the Chapter office.

— PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER —

Sierra Club Outings Program Offers Leader Training in the Fox Valley

May 12-14 at Camp Tu-Endie-Wei outside Elgin

If you're a Sierra Club outing leader or you want to become one, this interactive and educational workshop is for you.

Leader training is a never-ending process, so whether you're an old hand or have never led a trip before, you're invited to attend a weekend of interactive learning, networking with leaders from all outing programs and, of course, lots of fun.

Sponsored by the Sierra Club's national Outdoor Activities Training Program (OATP), this is the only national SC training event planned for the midwest in 2004 and will be limited to the first 50 people who register.

What's Planned?

- The goals of the Core workshop are to learn and enhance leadership skills, bring people and programs together to share and exchange ideas, welcome new outdoor leaders, learn what it takes to lead for other outings programs of the Sierra Club and, once again, to have a lot of fun.
- The purpose of the Core workshop is to bring together new and seasoned leaders from ICO (Inner City Outings), GCO (Group & Chapter Outings), and NO (National Outings). The agenda for the workshop will encompass an extensive array of leadership topics presented in both group and breakout formats.

Time, Date and Location

Where: Camp Tu-Endie-Wei, located between Elgin and St. Charles in the Fox Valley area just outside of Chicago.

When: May 12-14, 2004 from 6:00 p.m. Friday to 1:15 p.m. on Sunday. Friday check-in and dinner from 6:00 p.m., 7:30 p.m. — Opening Program. Sunday ends at 1:15 p.m. after lunch.

Cost: \$45 includes all meals and bunk-style lodging

Registration Information

Register on-line at <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/training>

Three other ways to register (include name(s), address, telephone #, e-mail, membership #, and workshop #04992AA).

Mail: send check or money order for \$45 to: Sierra Club Outings, 85 Second Street, 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94105

Call: credit card only: 415-977-5588, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. PST
Fax: credit card only: 415-977-5795, include card number, expiration date and signature

Questions?

Please contact Steven Shewach, Sierra Club Outdoor Activities Training Manager, at steven.shewach@sierraclub.org or 415-977-5711 for more information.

Midwin Alliance: Fourth Annual Native Plant Sale and Fund-Raiser

by Jerry Heinrich, Sauk-Calumet Group

Although winter has taken firm hold of the landscape, gardeners prefer to think that the first signs of spring and a new planting season are just around the corner. It's the perfect time to plan next year's garden and to contemplate improvements to the backyard landscape.

This year, consider planting native plants and shrubs to give your flower beds a more natural look. Establish several "islands of prairie" by planting native shrubs in groups for effect and privacy. Take pleasure in eliminating some of that high-maintenance bluegrass.

Native forbs, grasses, and shrubs will not only add color to your yard but will also attract a wide variety of birds, butterflies, and other wildlife by providing food and habitat throughout the seasons.

While it does take some effort to establish native vegetation, the results are quite special and rewarding. Once established, native plants provide a beautiful low maintenance, drought resistant, enduring landscape.

During January and February of 2004, the Midwin

Tallgrass Prairie Alliance (MTPA) will be taking orders for a variety of native plants and shrubs as a fund-raiser to support its activities.

The Midwin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance is a not-for-profit organization that serves as a friend of the U.S. Forest Service Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie. The Alliance includes numerous organizations and individuals having interest in conservation and the environment. The Sierra Club is a charter member of the Midwin Alliance and continues to provide active support through its volunteers.

How to Order Plants and Support the MTPA

To obtain a 2004 Native Plant Order Form with plant and shrub descriptions, costs, and details concerning pick-up location and delivery date, send your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address to: Midwin Tallgrass Prairie Alliance, P.O. Box 2026, Joliet, IL 60434.

Questions? Contact Jerry Heinrich at 815-476-6171.

ISCAN — continued from page 1

alerts per month, you can expect that alerts on IL-ALERTS may be as frequent as twice per week. Each alert will explain an issue and how to contact your official by phone, e-mail, or letter.

If you're interested in making your voice heard more

effectively, surf to <http://www.illinois.sierraclub.org> and click on "Take Action" to take the plunge to bigger and better grassroots lobbying. Look for the ISCAN or IL-ALERTS icons in the right column. Soon you'll be riding bigger waves, too!

Common Sense Democracy — How to Complete the American Revolution in Your Neighborhood

Longtime Sierra Club activist Clayton Daughenbaugh has written *Common Sense Democracy*, a book drawing on his personal experience of 20 years as a community organizer. The book is a manual for how individuals can accumulate the power necessary to call the shots in their communities, starting with their own street and block.

Common Sense Democracy, part how-to manual and part manifesto, is a must-read for 21st Century patriots. To order a copy, mail a check (made payable to Clayton Daughenbaugh) for \$18.31 to 1311 S. Elmwood, Berwyn, IL 60402. The book also is available at local bookstores or on-line at <http://www.amazon.com> and <http://www.xlibris.com>.

Bush Vulnerable on Environment: Sierra Club Goes on the Offensive to Challenge President

by John Byrne Barry, editor of *The Planet*

President Bush took a break from his vacation in August to visit the Northwest and shore up his badly tarnished environmental credentials. He came away with a black eye.

He flew into Portland to promote his so-called Healthy Forests initiative, but the Sierra Club scooped him, holding a press conference the day before denouncing the president's plan for failing to protect communities at risk from fire while giving away money to the timber industry that should be spent on fire prevention.

Bush visited Washington to tout the administration's efforts to protect salmon, but was met by protesters assailing him for threatening salmon (and democracy, among other things). There were so many protesters, in fact, that he cancelled his only public appearance in the Seattle-Tacoma area and flew instead to present himself as the friend of the salmon at the remote Ice Harbor Dam, one of the major salmon killers in the Pacific Northwest.

The president's public support has dropped dramatically, according to recent public opinion polls. Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope links the decline to the quagmire in Iraq, the stalled economy, and the beating the Bush administration has taken of late for its anti-environmental actions.

Republican pollster Frank Luntz acknowledges that "the environment is the single issue on which Republicans in general — and President Bush in particular — are most vulnerable." Nevertheless, Bush is devoting attention to the environment because he knows it matters a lot to many sought-after swing voters, like suburban women.

Of course, it would be easier for the president to look pro-environment if he weren't simultaneously unleashing some of the most anti-environmental policies in decades. As Sierra Club Legislative Director Debbie Sease puts it: "The Bush pattern is to do something harmful to the environment and call it something helpful."

For example, in August, the Bush administration released its final ruling weakening the Clean Air Act by allowing older factories to expand without installing modern pollution control technologies. The administration tried to put a good spin on it, saying that "pollution will not increase as a result of this rule."

But increasingly, the administration is not getting away with it. The *San Francisco Chronicle* called the weakening of the Clean Air Act, "the most damaging rollback in its 30-year history." Even the *Billings Gazette* was stinging in its criticism: "The Bush administration eased a series of important environmental regulations in a quiet flurry of late-summer activity, delivering almost every rule change on corporate America's wish list."

Meanwhile, *Mother Jones* and *Vanity Fair* have published exposés of the Bush administration's environmental record. In *Mother Jones*, Osha Gray Davidson wrote: "No president has gone after the nation's environmental laws with the same fury as George W. Bush — and none has been so adept at staying under the radar." Davidson said that the Bush administration is filled with "anti-regulatory zealots deep into its rank and file" who come from the industries they are charged with regulating.

In "Sale of the Wild," *Vanity Fair's* Michael Shnayerson zeroed in on one of those zealots, J. Steven Griles, the deputy interior secretary and a former lobbyist for the coal, oil, and gas industries. Shnayerson wrote: "Every administration rewards its friends, but never has there been such a wholesale giveaway of government agencies to the very industries they're meant to oversee." Shnayerson's story was accompanied by a photo spread of Griles and Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton in the great outdoors. *Vanity Fair* Editor Graydon Carter wrote, "They both look like Sierra Club veterans:



Norton in trekking gear and a Patagonia-cum-Smokey the Bear outfit, and Griles on horseback, resembling some latter-day Theodore Roosevelt."

President Bush, too, has been careful to schedule plenty of photo-ops in front of national parks and forests. During his August forays from his Crawford ranch, Bush took a well-choreographed hike in California's Santa Monica Mountains and talked up plans to upgrade national parks. These attempts to look pro-environment reflect the advice of pollster Luntz, who outlined a strategy last fall advising Republicans to counter the perception that Republicans are anti-environmental by showing their love of the outdoors.

For the Sierra Club, the key is going after Bush as in Portland and Seattle — getting there first to frame the story and going on the offensive wherever possible. "Bush is playing on people's fears and lowering expectations," says Pope. "We have to counter this strategy, raise people's hopes, and remind them that we have a proven track record of solving our environmental problems."

For a thorough look at Bush's anti-environmental actions, go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/wwatch>.

Register to Vote Today!

In this all-important election year, it's important that everyone who cares about the environment and is eligible to vote actually casts a vote.

The deadline to register to vote is mid-February — 30 days before the primary election. Call the County Clerk's office to find out where to register (voter registration booths are often found at libraries and shopping centers) or how to change your address if you have moved within the same county. If you have moved to a new county or are a new resident of Illinois, you will need to re-register.

Make your vote count in 2004 — registertoday and vote to help the environment in March!

Illinois Chapter Sues to Protect State's Threatened and Endangered Species

by Barbara McKasson, Shawnee Group Conservation Chair

The 20-year struggle between the forces that would turn Sugar Creek into yet another man-made lake and the forces that would save Sugar Creek as a free flowing, natural stream has reached another turning point.

Marion City officials insist they must build a new dam and reservoir to replace the water supply from the inadequate old Marion City reservoir. As a step towards building a new reservoir, the city of Marion has obtained an Incidental Take Permit from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to kill ("take") state threatened Least Brook Lamprey and state endangered Indiana Crayfish that inhabit Sugar Creek southeast of Marion. To build the reservoir, the city must also obtain a Section 401 Clean Water Act certification from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and a Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit from the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

The Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club and individual citizens have brought suits against Marion's intentions to dam Sugar Creek and have won several times. The Chapter has filed a suit against IDNR on the grounds that Marion's Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) will not sufficiently minimize and mitigate the impact of the project on the threatened and endangered species, that the alternatives analysis is insufficient and that the public was not given adequate opportunity to review the HCP.

The heart of the Sierra Club's objection is that the dam project creates unnecessary degradation of Sugar Creek. The stretch of Sugar Creek that would be affected by this project is the very segment of the creek that has been listed as one of Illinois' 132 remaining "biologically significant streams" in the technical report, Biologically Significant Illinois Streams, prepared by the Illinois Natural History Survey.

The introduction to this study states: "The objective of our study was to identify the state's most biologically significant streams so that protection efforts can be concentrated on a reasonable number of streams and the objective of protecting 100% of Illinois' stream-dependent biodiversity can be realized."

If the Marion Dam is built, the limited remaining habitat of at least two threatened and endangered species will be reduced and aquatic biodiversity diminished. Dr. Larry Page, an internationally recognized expert on crayfish, stated that if the project proceeds, it could lead to the listing of the Indiana Crayfish as a federally endangered species.

The Corps studied the possibility of building a reservoir on Sugar Creek, but concluded in 1979 that the proposed lake was not economically feasible. However, in 1983, a group of private investors proposed creating a recreational lake project on Sugar Creek, complete with marinas, stables, condos, a golf course and retirement homes. The investors coerced many landowners to sell. However, when adequate project funding did not materialize, investors began selling their land options to the Sugar Creek Lake Development Co. Many of the options now belong to the city of Marion.

Marion needed to supplement its main water source, the old Marion City Lake, but it steadfastly refused offers from the administrators of nearby Rend Lake Conservancy District (RLCD) to join the Rend Lake Intercity Water System (RLIWS). If the city had accepted the offers from RLCD, it would have saved millions of dollars and its citizens would have obtained a reliable, high quality, reasonably priced source of drinking water years ago.

Instead, in 1987, the city completed a new water treatment plant, although it had not obtained a supplementary source of raw water to treat. Then, in 1989, Marion applied for a permit from the Corps to build a dam and reservoir on Sugar Creek in the exact location of the previously proposed recreational lake.

Sierra Club has long advocated that the city of Marion should negotiate a favorable contract with the RLCD in order to supplement the water it gets from Marion City Lake. City officials have continued to make up excuses for not hooking up to the RLIWS. For example, Marion officials have claimed that a pipeline from RLIWS could be broken by an earthquake or by mine subsidence. However, the Rend Lake system is now a "looped system," with the ability to reroute water through alternative pipes should any break occur in the system.

In fact, activists learned Marion is already hooked up to RLIWS by means of a connection to the town of Herrin's water system. Last summer, the manager of RLCD publicly stated they have a high-pressure, 18-inch water line within two miles of the Marion water system and have ample capacity to fulfill all the town's water needs.

Several industries, a mall and a hospital in Marion already have direct lines connecting to the Rend Lake system.

Sierra Club activists simply believe Marion city officials doth protest too much. Marion has hired several consultants to conduct cost/benefit studies for this project. The Illinois Chapter hired The Brattle Group, a respected consulting group, to conduct an independent analysis of the studies. The Brattle Group concluded that "the economics of the proposed Sugar Creek dam and water supply reservoir likely were comparable to several alternatives, rather than clearly superior." Anti-degradation regulations of the Clean Water Act state that a project which degrades a waterway so it can no longer support threatened and endangered species cannot be permitted if there is a cost effective alternative. Thus, by law, the city of Marion should not be allowed to degrade an Illinois waterway by damming Sugar Creek.

This fight against the Marion Dam has already sent a message to other cities and towns that it is no longer easy to get permission to dam a high quality stream in order to build their own municipal lake.

The Illinois Chapter will continue to oppose dam and reservoir proposals by municipalities that have cost-effective alternatives that would not degrade Illinois' remaining high quality streams. Our message is consistent, firm and persuasive.

Sierra Club believes the state should play a larger role in encouraging municipalities to hook up to existing regional water supplies that are underutilized, such as Cedar Lake and Rend Lake, both of which are close to Marion.

And, Club activists want to convince Marion city officials that hooking up to the Rend Lake system is the path of least resistance and that they should "go with the flow."