

# Wild Onion

The Newsletter of the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club

Third Quarter 2008

## Global Warming Impacts on Wildlife

### Chicago Group's Green Festival Message Reaches 50,000

by Christine Williamson, Chicago Group Conservation Chair

The Chicago Group of the Sierra Club hosted a booth at Chicago's highly successful Green Festival, focusing on the impacts of global warming on wildlife.

More than 60,000 people came to GreenFest and many stopped by our booth to learn about the devastating impact of global warming on climate, habitats and many species of plant, animal, fish, insect and fungi.

May 16 was the third annual U.S. Endangered Species Day and the timing of the festival — May 17 and 18 — was perfect. We featured the Polar Bear as the tip of the iceberg example of global warming's negative impacts on species. We collected thousands of signatures on a petition to Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne thanking him for listing the Polar Bear as Threatened on the U.S. Endangered Species list, but insisting that the bear receive stronger habitat protections, especially from oil drilling.

We brought in internationally recognized Arctic activist Chad Kister to give two programs on May 17 at the festival about the impacts of global warming on wildlife. Chad has a very personable speaking style and really captivated the crowds at his lectures.

We also educated the crowd about ways they could save wildlife by reducing their personal contribution to global warming through simple lifestyle changes. We collected thousands of postcards urging Illinois officials to make the state less energy consumptive by adopting California Clean Car standards.

If you missed Sierra Club's GreenFest booth, you can learn more about endangered species and the club's efforts to protect wildlife at [www.sierra-club.org/esa](http://www.sierra-club.org/esa). To learn more about the impacts of global warming on wildlife and habitat see: <http://www.sierra-club.org/global-warming/habitat/>

Many thanks to the volunteers who assisted at the Green Fest.

Special, enormous thanks to Cory Jones and Bob Coon for the countless hours they spent creating a beautiful booth display and organizing volunteers.



*An endangered Polar Bear makes friends with two Greenfest attendees.*



*Cory Jones and Bob Coon at the Sierra Club booth.*

## Cubs Fundraiser: 2008 is THE Year! Help the Cubs Beat a 100-Year Pennant Drought and the Sierra Club's Conservation Programs

Join us on August 20, 7:05 p.m., at Wrigley Field. Chicago Group will repeat last year's sold out Cubs fundraiser. This year, we expect the Cubs to badly spank the Cincinnati Reds (now managed by ex-Cubbie manager Dusty Baker).

The 50 upper deck tickets on the first base line are being sold for \$30 each, with \$10 going toward support of Chicago Group's many conservation initiatives.

Reserve your tickets now: There are not many tickets left. Ticket limit: five per person.

You'll get one entry to the Environmental Activist Awards Program for participating in this activity.

Contact Christine Williamson at [birdchris@aol.com](mailto:birdchris@aol.com) and be sure to indicate how many seats you want. Your tickets are reserved upon receipt of your check.

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# Attention! Warning! Advance Notice! Chicago Group All-E Experiment: 4th Q Newsletter Going Electronic

The Chicago Group saves a huge amount of postage expense by attaching its newsletter, *Wild Onion*, to the Chapter newsletter, *Lake & Prairie*.

We also keep costs low by keeping content very conservation-oriented (i.e., not political or lobbying related) so we can claim reimbursement for between 60 and 80 percent of the \$1,200 of print costs from the Sierra Club's foundation. Since our annual newsletter printing cost is nearly \$5,000, the reimbursement is very important to our modest budget.

But the fourth quarter Chapter newsletter will be chock-full of election endorsements, which renders all the attached newsletters ineligible for reimbursement.

Chicago Group can't afford the full cost of this last newsletter of the year, so we're trying an experiment: *Wild Onion* will only be available electronically on our

web site and the only notices we'll send will include an e-mail link to the online *Wild Onion* PDF document.

If you join the 2,300 Chicago Group members on our e-news mailing list, you'll get monthly event calendars delivered to your e-mail in-box as well as a link to *Wild Onion* when it's ready for prime time on the web site. Subscribe to e-new today on the web site at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/>.

If you don't have Internet access and would like a paper print-out of *Wild Onion*, please call Christine Williamson at 773-935-8439 and leave your name, address and telephone number.

If the Chicago Group All-E Experiment is successful, we'll repeat it in future. It's a great way to save tons of money that might be better used for funding conservation activities than on ink and paper.

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## Low Carbon Diet: Use Less to Fight Global Warming

by Cynthia Linton, Air & Energy Committee

You know how hard it is to lose five or 10 pounds. How would you like to lose 5,000?

That's how much American energy hogs can lose in just 30 days by going on an energy diet. The *Low Carbon Diet Book* by David Gershon, published by the Empowerment Institute, will explain everything.

The average American household is responsible for releasing 55,000 pounds of carbon dioxide into the air each year. Since 85 percent of carbon emissions come from residences in most U.S. communities, by reducing carbon emissions, families can make a big difference in the fight against global warming.

The *Low Carbon Diet Book* workbook makes it easy by listing how many pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> you can lose for each of many actions. The check list helps you to keep track of the carbon consequences of your actions.

For example, one ton of carbon can be lost by:

- replacing four light bulbs with CFLs — 600 lbs;
- washing your clothes in warm or cold water instead of hot — 600 lbs;
- saving one dishwasher load per week by loading it up— 175 lbs;

- lowering your thermostat two degrees in winter and raising it two degrees in summer — 500 lbs.

Because dieting is hard, group support is important, just like the Weight Watchers Program. *The Low Carbon Diet Book* recommends that groups of six to eight people get together to be accountable to one another in trying to cut their energy consumption.

Sierra Club members are active carbon dieters.

Aaron Schreiber-Stainthorp, who led an eco-team in Rogers Park said "changing behavior is one of the hardest things to do. *The Low Carbon Diet* is such an inspirational program because it relies on people helping people. It has successfully helped more than 250,000 people so far to reduce their carbon footprint, save money and get to know their neighbors."

Bill Morrisett is leading an eco-team in Hyde Park and has set up a web site to help coordinate Low Carbon Diet activities in Chicago and its suburbs. See <http://chicagolowcarbondiet.org>.

To purchase the *Low Carbon Diet Book* and learn more about how you can participate, go to <http://www.empowermentinstitute.net>.

### Chicago Group Information

For information about the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club, check the web site often: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago>. You may also subscribe to e-News for e-mail delivery of a monthly calendar of activities.

Chicago Group's newsletter, *Wild Onion*, is a quarterly publication with in-depth news and discussion of local issues. *Wild Onion* now can be sent electronically, saving printing expenses and paper. To receive *Wild Onion* by e-mail, send your name, Sierra Club membership number and e-mail address to [editor@illinois.sierraclub.org](mailto:editor@illinois.sierraclub.org).

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# 2008 The Year of Living Responsibly Calendar

Check the Sierra Club's web site for event details or sign up (on the web site) to receive Chicago Group's monthly e-news calendars which deliver club activities to your e-mail in-box. See <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/>.

If you don't have Internet access and need a paper copy of the Year of Living Responsibly Calendar, please call Christine Williamson at 773/935-8439 and leave a message with your name, address and phone number.

**July 19 — Montrose Beach Clean-Up and Dunes Restoration.** Why lie around on a sandy beach when you can clean it up or nurture a fabulous natural area home to rare and endangered plants and birds? You'll still get the fresh air and sunshine and will be contributing to a cleaner environment in the process.

**July 26 - From Farmers' Market to Picnic Table.** Eating locally, organically and simply will be the focus of this outing. A professional chef will go to Chicago's Green Market with us, help us select food that we'll take back to a kitchen for a cooking demonstration. Then, we'll picnic!

**August 10 - Dog Days of Summer Celebration: Ravinia by Bike or Public.** Sheryl Crow will be singing and strumming for the backdrop to a wonderful, relaxing evening. Bring a picnic dinner and join us at Ravinia. Public transportation is easy via Metra, which drops you at the venue gate. Abike contingent will be leaving Chicago and taking the North Shore path to and from Ravinia.

**August 20 — Cubs Fundraiser.** Ok, we admit it. Watching the Cubs punish the Cincinnati Reds (now managed by Dusty Baker) on a summer evening with 50 Sierra Club buddies is mostly just for fun. But this modest fundraiser will provide the money needed for Chicago Group's many conservation and environmental education programs. Reserve your tickets now: This event sold out and had a long wait list last year.

**August 26 — Montrose Beach Clean-Up and Dunes Restoration.** "Regular" people will be sick of the beach by now so this sandy stretch will be much less crowded than at our June and July workdays. But there still will be plenty of flotsam and jetsam washed up on the beach to clean up. Dunes plants will be in their late summer glory.

**September 6 - Tour of Chicago Household Waste Recycling Facility and waste drop-off.** Clear your house of haz-mat materials and every kind of outdated electronic appliance and cell phones. Your house will be roomier and you'll feel good about keeping the junk out of landfills. The tour is fun and educational.

**September 20 - Montrose Beach International Coastal Clean-Up.** Join more than 100 other Sierrans and friends in cleaning up Montrose Beach as a part of a worldwide coastal clean-up day. There also is an opportunity to work on a habitat restoration project in the dunes natural area of the beach. There is great potential for good bird watching during this period of fall migration.

**October 11 — Bike to the Botanic Gardens.** Enjoy a long (25-miles each way) greenway within a number of Cook County Forest Preserves. The bike trail parallels the North Branch of the Chicago River for a good portion of the journey and you'll soon see why this urban river is so important to migrating birds and terrestrial wildlife.

**October 22 - Air/Energy Issues Night.** Members of Chicago Group's Air/Energy Committee will host an evening of discussion, education and action about global warming and energy issues over good food and drink.

**November 8 — Greening Your Life: Home, Garden, Workplace.** This day-long event will feature a series of presentations about great solutions — from Sierrans and green tech professionals — that will help you maintain a responsible, sustainable lifestyle. From your health to your home to your garden and your office, this celebration will give you concrete ways to improve your life.

**December 6 - Holiday Service Outing and Party at the Illinois Chapter Office.** We'll start early in the day and do whatever is needed at the Chapter office from computer data entry to painting, filing, and making phone calls to volunteers. By noon, we'll need some holiday cheer. Lunch and drinks will be provided. We'll be awarding prizes to member volunteers who have been active all year in living their lives more responsibly and we will finally draw the winning ticket for the fabulous \$1,000 Sierra Club trip raffle prize.

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## Subscribe to Chicago Group e-News

Chicago Group has a better way to keep members up-to-date with news and events: Chicago Group e-News.

Through e-News, subscribers are kept informed monthly about programs, socials, outings and environmental events in our neighborhoods.

This listserv is for members only; you must have a Sierra Club membership number to sign up. Check the

address label on *Sierra* magazine to find your number.

Take a minute to subscribe online to receive the next issue at <http://Illinois.SierraClub.org/Chicago/e-News>.

For information about Chicago Group's social outings, subscribe to the e-newsletter at: [http://illinois.sierraclub.org/chicago/socials/social\\_listserv.html](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/chicago/socials/social_listserv.html) and check the web at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/chicago/outings/>.

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## E-Waste/Haz Waste Recycling Drop-Off Day

Plus Tour of Chicago Household Waste Recycling Facility

1150 N. North Branch St. on Goose Island, September 6, 10:00 a.m.

Chicago Group will host the Illinois Chapter Executive Committee for a mega recycling day. ExCom members will be collecting old electronics and household hazardous waste from homes in all corners of the state to bring to the Chicago Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Center.

Chicago Group members are welcome to join the group for this very popular tour, our fifth in 18 months.

Every attendee comes away impressed with the ingenuity of the city's Department of the Environment staff in finding ways to recycle tons of electronics and hundreds of gallons of potential pollutants.

The facility accepts the following for recycling or safe

disposal: antifreeze, used motor oil, old gasoline, oil-based paints, paint thinners, aerosol paints, herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, lawn chemicals, solvents, drain cleaners, cleaning products, pool chemicals, hobby chemicals, mercury, fluorescent lamps and bulbs, computers and cell phones. There's also a swap room where you can take away partially used chemical products and paint that you can use.

You'll get one entry to the Environmental Activist Awards Program for participating in this activity.

Please R.S.V.P. for the tour to event leader Christine Williamson at [birdchris@aol.com](mailto:birdchris@aol.com) or evenings at 773-935-8439.

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## Montrose Beach Mega Clean-Up & Dunes Restoration

September 20, 9:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.

Join more than 100 other Sierrans and friends in cleaning up Montrose Beach as a part of a worldwide coastal clean-up day. There also is an opportunity to work on a habitat restoration project in the dunes natural area of the beach. Chicago Group has adopted Montrose Beach and we truly love taking care of this natural oasis in our crowded city.

Refreshments will be served. Dress for the weather (the event runs rain or shine), wear a hat and bring work gloves if you have them.

If you have questions, please contact the event leader, Cory Jones at [cory.jones@illinois.sierraclub.org](mailto:cory.jones@illinois.sierraclub.org).

You'll get one entry to the Environmental Activist

Awards Program for participating in this activity.

Directions: Meet on the water (east) side of the beach house at Montrose Beach; look for the Sierra Club banner. Take Montrose east under Lake Shore Drive. Take the first possible right turn (at the bait shop). About 200 yards after the turn, look on your left for a paved path heading toward the water. The white beach house is at the end of the path — you'll see it through the trees. If you drive, park on either side of the park road and walk over to the beach house. Bike parking is available at the beach house. The #78 Montrose bus stops at Marine and Lake Shore Drive. Head east under LSD and follow the directions above; the walk to the beach house will take about 15 minutes.

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## Nature Photography Discussion Group Forming

The Chicago Social Group is forming a Nature Photography Discussion Group.

If you like getting outdoors and taking pictures, you can share your enjoyment with others. The group will take photographs and discuss ways to improve techniques. We will also plan future photographic assignments for the year. The first meeting will be in August.

For more information, contact Take' Yamamoto at [ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org](mailto:ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org) or at 773-528-7812.

To hear more about what the Socials group is doing, get on our e-mail list at: [http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/socials/social\\_listserv.html](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/socials/social_listserv.html)

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## Say Bye Bye to Blue Bags

The absurd Chicago Blue Bag Program is on its way to the landfill, thanks to 16 years of effort by the Chicago Recycling Coalition (CRC). Chicago Group of the Sierra Club has been a coalition member for many years and applauds the efforts of the group to finally get a viable recycling program in the city of Chicago. The Blue Bag recycling program will end this summer and be replaced with source separated Blue Carts citywide by 2011.

Chicago will add approximately 15 additional recycling drop-off locations during the transition period as, ward by ward, the city roll outs the Blue Cart program.

The CRC and the City of Chicago also agreed in principle this spring to a broader framework for improving recycling across different business and residential sectors in Chicago. An ordinance will be introduced to codify wider recycling mandates throughout the city.

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