

Palisades Views



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February 2008

Watersheds are important, too

Merriam-Webster defines “watershed” as “a region or area bounded peripherally by a divide and draining ultimately to a particular water-course or body of water.”



That covers a lot of ground. It can include farmland, woods, hills, prairies, neighborhoods, shopping centers, industrial sites, you name it.

What happens in watersheds is critical to the health of rivers, lakes and streams and the quality of our drinking water. Sierra Club members need to consider this when working on river issues.

Two experts will speak on the subject at the February meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group. One is Cecily Smith, outreach specialist for Prairie Rivers Network. The other is Mike Fruth, Madison County Stormwater director.

Prairie Rivers Network is Illinois’ only statewide river-protection organization. It’s “committed to protecting rivers

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Churches plan energy conference

“Caring for Creation by Going Green” is not your typical energy conference.

It’s a cooperative effort between the Sierra Club and United Congregations of MetroEast Alton Cluster, an activist group of churches that want to help improve the environment through local community efforts.

Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9, at the National Great Rivers Museum in East Alton, off Illinois 143, adjacent to Melvin Price Locks and Dam.

“The goal is to provide ... participants with an increased appreciation of the sacredness of God’s creation and to encourage the desire to treat life with more dignity and respect as inspired stewards of the Earth’s air, water and land,” organizers said.

The conference will begin with worship, followed by presentations on how to become more environmentally friendly in homes and churches. Participants will receive survey forms to help them evaluate their efforts to reduce, reuse, recycle and otherwise conserve natural resources.

“Congregations can assess if they are communicating, through worship and religious education, the idea that people of faith need to take responsibility in caring

for the natural world,” organizers said.

Participants will also learn about the national Cool Cities campaign, which seeks commitments from municipal governments to become more energy efficient and reduce greenhouse gases. Local, county and state officials will be on hand to discuss what they’re already doing to become more “green.”

The conference fee is \$10, which includes lunch. Registration is required by Wednesday, Feb. 6. Tickets can be purchased in advance at College Street Presbyterian Church, Elm Street Presbyterian Church, First

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New ExCom takes office

Four incumbents and two newcomers were elected to the Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee in last month’s election.

The incumbents are Sandy Wood, Jim Bensman, Everett Loy and Wayne Politsch, all of Alton. Newcomers are Patricia Murrell of Alton and Dave Gocken of Edwardsville. Committee appointments are pending.

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Serving the Southwestern Illinois counties of

Bond, Calhoun, Fayette, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison and Montgomery.

Byrd, Sands honored at winter gala for service

By Wayne Politsch
Group chair

Welcome to the February issue of Palisades Views. Despite busy schedules, I hope you are finding time to enjoy the weather, sunrises and sunsets, the night sky or a good book with a cat on your lap.

Sierra Club members and friends held their annual winter gala on Jan.

Moonlight hikers will see eclipse

Sierra Club members and friends will see a total-lunar eclipse on Wednesday, Feb. 20, during the Piasa Palisades Group's monthly moonlight hike at Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve in Godfrey.

Hikers will meet at 7 p.m. at Tahali Lodge. From Homer Adams Parkway in Alton (Illinois 3), turn right on West Delmar in Godfrey (also Illinois 3), left on Levis Lane and left on South Levis.

Organizer Sandy Wood suggests people be on time or a little early for a short hike to a viewing platform in Hutchinson Prairie.

"If you can't make the hike, find another good viewing spot, wherever you are, and join in the wonder," she said.

Here is the day's "moon schedule," courtesy of Conservation Chair Jim Bensman:

Moon rises: 5:29 p.m.

Sun sets: 5:43 p.m.

Partial eclipse phase begins: 7:47 p.m. (moon in the east).

Total phase begins: 9:04 p.m.

Maximum eclipse: 9:29 p.m.

Total phase ends: 9:54 p.m. (moon in the southeast).

Partial phase ends: 11:11 p.m.

26 at Mississippi Sanctuary in Godfrey. Great conversation, entertainment and photos, along with delectable food, made for an evening to remember.

ExCom member Jon Byrd was honored with the Rookie Sierran of the Year Award for his work on the Cool Cities campaign and the time and vision he invests in the mission of our organization.

Longtime member Gene Sands was honored with the Decades of Service Award for his years of commitment and continued support for Sierra Club values and activities. Many of us have burr oaks and prairie plants generously provided by Gene for our back yards.

A very special "thank you" to Bob Larson, Jennifer Politsch and Sandy Wood for doing all the necessary tasks to make the gala a success.

Thanks also to those who voted in the Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee election last month (results are reported on page 1). A warm welcome to the two new members, Patricia Murrell and Dave Gocken.

NOTICE

Mark your calendars if you're interested in:

1) Attending a stormwater-construction workshop sponsored by Prairie Rivers Network and the Sierra Club on April 5.

2) Helping with a Trailnet clean-up along the Mississippi River near the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge on April 12.

3) Bringing unwanted items to a Sierra Club computer and electronics recycling drive at Alton Square mall on April 19.

We live in challenging and exciting times. With all the media and corporation talk of "going green," Sierrans must keep the conversation authentic and sustained.

I hope you find time to join a Sierra Club hike or meeting this year. Both are excellent opportunities to join like-minded people who are collectively enjoying, exploring and protecting the natural systems of the planet.

Workshop planned for "river watchers"

If you're looking for an opportunity to help with stewardship of the state's rivers and streams, grab your rubber boots and join Illinois River-Watch.

The program is administered by the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center for the State of Illinois. A free, interactive workshop on Saturday, March 8, will give you the tools to test water quality like a professional.

During a lab session, participants will discuss monitoring procedures and learn to identify stream macroinvertebrates. Then they will get hand's-on experience in a local stream.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey. Monitoring equipment will be provided. Please bring knee-high boots or waders, sun block, insect repellent, a water bottle and lunch.

After completing the workshop, each participant can adopt a local stream site and monitor it annually.

To register or get more information, call Vera Bojic at (618) 468-4870 or send her an e-mail at vbojic@lc.edu.

CALENDAR

Saturday, Feb. 9 Faith-based energy conference at National Great Rivers Museum in East Alton, co-sponsored by the Sierra Club and United Congregations of MetroEast

Alton Cluster (see related article). "Caring for Creation by Going Green" will include workshops on how to protect and improve the environment through



community efforts. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The registration deadline is Wednesday, Feb. 6. The \$10 fee includes lunch. For more information, call (618) 465-8861.

Monday, Feb. 11 Watershed presentations at the monthly meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group (see related article). Cecily Smith of Prairie Rivers Network and Mike Fruth of Madison County Stormwater will be the guest speakers. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in the community room at First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby Streets in Alton. For more information, call the Sierra Club office at (618) 462-6802.

Mondays, Feb. 11 to March 24 Voluntary Simplicity discussion course, sponsored by La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. Explore material and psychological distractions that prevent people from caring for the Earth, themselves and their relationships. A maximum of 10 people will discuss readings from a guidebook in an informal setting from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The guidebook costs \$20. To register or get more information or directions, call the Oblate Ecological Initiative at (618) 466-5004.

Wednesday, Feb. 13 Knee-High Naturalists program at The Nature Institute in Godfrey for children ages 3-5 accompanied by an adult. February's theme is "Sugaring." Participants will tap, collect and boil maple sap to make syrup, weather permitting. Morning session from 10 to 11 a.m. and afternoon session from 1 to 2 p.m. The \$5 cost includes a nature walk, snack and craft. Register by Friday, Feb. 8. For more information, call Patti Brown at (618) 466-9930.

Friday, Feb. 15 Stargazing at Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville. Sierran Steve Sands will bring telescopes and share his vast knowledge of astronomy. Admission is free, but registration is required. Families welcome. Warm clothing recommended. The center is at 1591 Tower Ave., across from Hoppe Park. For more information, call Michaeleen Gerken at (618) 692-7578 or e-mail her at watershed@cityofedwardsville.com.

Saturday, Feb. 16 Eagle ecology program at The Nature Institute in Godfrey for ages 5 to adult. Learn about eagles and view them from the bluff-top Mississippi Sanctuary office. Hours are 9 to 11 a.m., weather permitting. The \$5 fee includes a short hike, lunch and crafts for children. Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars, telescopes and cameras, if desired. Registration required. For more information, call (618) 466-9930.

Monday, Feb. 18 Executive Committee meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group. All members are welcome to attend! Meet at 7 p.m. at the Sierra Club office, 223 Market

St. in Alton. For more information, call (618) 462-6802.

Wednesday, Feb. 20 Monthly moonlight hike, sponsored by the Piasa Palisades Group (see related notice). Explore Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve, 2213 S. Levis Lane in Godfrey. Meet at 7 p.m. at Talahi Lodge. From Homer Adams Parkway in Alton (Illinois 3), turn right on West Delmar in Godfrey (also Illinois 3), left on Levis Lane and left on South Levis. Bring a friend! For more information, call Sandy Wood at (618) 463-0358.

Friday, Feb. 22 Environmental film screening. The Student Organization for Sustainability at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville will show "The 11th Hour" at 3 and 7 p.m. in Abbott Auditorium, in the basement

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Palisades Views

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**DEADLINE FOR MARCH:
SATURDAY, FEB. 23**



Campaign pushes for wilderness designations

Editor's note: Terri Treacy, Sierra Club conservation field representative in Southern Illinois, has asked Palisades Views to print this call to action on proposed wilderness areas in Shawnee National Forest. It's geared toward residents of the 12th Congressional District, which may or may not apply to you, but the idea is to gain statewide support for this important effort.

ATTENTION SHAWNEE DEFENDERS in U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello's district. The congressman needs to hear from you!

With the beginning of a new year, the Shawnee Campaign is setting a new course for proposed wilderness

designations in Shawnee National Forest. We're focusing on two eligible areas in Costello's district: Camp Hutchins and Ripple Hollow.

In a personal meeting, the congressman indicated to Shawnee committee members he's open to pursuing bills to designate these two areas. However, he also made it clear he needs to know he has widespread support for such an initiative in his district.

Please let Costello know you fully support wilderness designation for Camp Hutchins and wilderness-study designation for Ripple Hollow, with full wilderness protection for Ripple Hollow pending resolution of outstanding mineral rights.

Let the congressman know you want these special areas permanently protected with wilderness designation. Point out that without such designation, the areas are in jeopardy because the next Forest Resource Management Plan could easily open them to development, logging and off-road-vehicle use.

We have an opportunity right now to leave a legacy of two important, pristine wild areas for future generations.

Please e-mail your message to Costello by visiting the Web site at <https://forms.house.gov/wyr/welcome.shtml> or fax your message to (202) 225-0285.

For more information on the Shawnee Campaign, call Treacy at (618) 521-1030.

CALENDAR

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of SIUE's Lovejoy Library. The documentary was produced by actor and environmentalist Leonardo DiCaprio, who also serves as narrator. Admission is free, thanks to financial support from the university's Student Activities Board.

CONFERENCE

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Presbyterian Church, First Unitarian Church and Trinity Lutheran Church. Or make a reservation by calling (618) 465-8861 and pay at the conference.

WATERSHED

Continued from page 1

and other water resources for the health of people, wildlife and communities."

Smith's talk is titled "Pharmaceuticals in Our Waterways." She will explain how pharmaceuticals enter rivers and streams and why we need to be concerned about it. She also will offer solutions for reducing or eliminating this class of contaminants.

Fruth has been Madison County Stormwater director for five years (Sierran Dick Worthen was the first to serve in the position). His talk is titled "Phase 2 Stormwater Efforts Created by 2003 Legislation."

The goal of the county's stormwater program is to improve water quality. Fruth holds four meetings a year with representatives of 29 communities, including all of the

"river cities." He coordinates an annual "steam sweep" and plans educational activities such as the Water Stewardship Festival. He inspects stormwater facilities and serves as a community consultant.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 11, in the community room of First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton. Refreshments and discussion will follow the presentation.



JOIN THE FUN!

www.myspace.com/piasapalisades

Ballots will arrive soon for the National Sierra Club Board of Directors election. Recent participation has dropped to below 10 percent. PLEASE VOTE and help maintain this democratically structured organization.