

# Palisades Views



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September 2011

## Air quality is meeting topic

It's September already? Amazing. The Piasa Palisades Group will officially end summer vacation with its Sept. 12 monthly meeting.

The guest speaker is Amy Funk, who will talk about air quality in the region. She formerly served as chair of the Sierra Club's Kaskaskia Group, based in Belleville.

Funk now heads the Metro East Citizens Air Quality Project. It's part of Illinois Action Research, a "community engagement" program of the University of Illinois College of Fine and Applied Arts.

"The project aims to promote community-based efforts to address air pollution by empowering community members as citizen scientists with knowledge and skills to advocate for improved air quality in their

neighborhoods," according to the website.

Activities will include raising public awareness of the health risks associated with air pollution, sponsoring educational programs, monitoring air quality and conducting other research.



One goal is to establish a solid foundation

for citizen activism that will sustain the project as a community-led 501c3 organization in three years.

"The metro-east has long exceeded national air-quality standards for ozone and fine particulates (smog and soot)," according to the website.

"Madison County was listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as worst in the nation (for cancer risk) in 2009 and is 12th for people at risk from long-term particle pollution.

"The area has high levels of cancer-causing chemicals and heavy metals from industry. Granite City is one of two areas in the state not meeting federal standards for lead, and the Wood River area (has a 'non-attainment designation) for

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## *Festival to celebrate river*

The fifth-annual Mississippi Earthtones Festival will be held from noon to 10 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 17, at Alton Riverfront Park.

It's a free and family friendly event that allows the public to celebrate the river through art, music and conservation.

Before the festival, a river clean-up will be coordinated by the Sierra Club, Living Lands and Waters, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Missouri River Relief. Volunteers are needed.

Wild Trak Cycling Club of Alton will lead bike rides along the levee from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

On the festival grounds, vendors will sell environmentally friendly goods and services beginning at noon. People can learn about area conservation-based programs and local businesses working to help us all become "greener."

Other activities include live bands, storytelling, Segway rides, a climbing wall, photography and painting contests, biodegradable water-balloon fights

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## WEEKEND IN THE WOODS is Oct. 7-9



See pages 2 and 3 for information and a registration form that's due Oct. 3.

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Serving the Southwestern Illinois counties of  
Bond, Calhoun, Fayette, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison and Montgomery.

# WEEKEND IN THE WOODS

## (FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES)

### YOUR PERSONAL INVITATION

The Sierra Club's Piasa Palisades Group cordially invites members, prospective members, families and friends to escape for a weekend in the woods. Come and enjoy the fall colors!

**When:** Friday afternoon, Oct. 7 through noon Sunday, Oct. 9. You can stay one night or two, or just come Saturday evening for the cookout and campfire.



**Where:** Beautiful Pere Marquette State Park, 7 miles west of Grafton along the Illinois River. We've reserved Camp Ouatoga for the weekend.

### OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

You can take advantage of activities led by the Sierra Club or Illinois Department of Natural Resources; explore the park on your own or just hang out around camp.

**Owl program:** Park interpreter Scott Isringhausen will give a talk and lead a 2-mile walk in the woods to listen and look for owls. Followed by a campfire for roasting hot dogs and marshmallows (food and drink provided). Bring one flashlight per family. Meet at 8 p.m. Friday at the visitors center.

**Pelican field trip:** A park interpreter will give a short talk on these magnificent birds then lead a caravan to places where they can be observed. Dress warmly and bring binoculars. Meet at 9 a.m. at the visitors center.

**Pere Marquette hiking:** Learn about the park's history and wildlife with hiking on some of its most in-

teresting trails. Wear good shoes and bring binoculars. Meet at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at the visitors center.

**Canoe trip:** Explore shallow backwater lakes along the Illinois River. Suitable for all skill levels. Canoes, paddles and life jackets provided. Led by Chris Krusa and Jim Bensman. Meet at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at the dining hall.

**Stargazing:** Look at stars with astronomy guru Steve Sands through a telescope after the Saturday night cookout. Bring a flashlight.

**"Lost-cabin" hike:** Hike to a 19th-century log cabin and barn that are gradually being taken over by nature. Led by Rich Keating. Meet at 10 a.m. Sunday at the dining hall.

### CAMP FACILITIES

Camp Ouatoga was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. It is rustic, wooded and isolated from the rest of the park, high on the Mississippi River bluffs.

**Lodging:** Single-room, enclosed cabins with screened and shuttered windows, electric lights and steel bunk beds with mattresses. Bring sleeping bags or sheets, blankets and pillows.

There also are several unit lodges that can house families, groups and single men or women who want to share. If you have health problems or other special needs, please indicate this when you make your reservation.

**Dining hall:** A large dining hall will serve as our headquarters. It has tables, benches and a fully equipped kitchen with a refrigerator, walk-in cooler, a great old gas range, toaster, coffee pot, sinks, dishes,

silverware, cooking utensils, pots and pans.

**Bath house:** Yes, the bath house is a modern, concrete-block facility with electricity, flush toilets, sinks, mirrors and private showers with hot water.

### MEALS AND ENTERTAINMENT

**Meals:** Just like home. You supply and prepare your own breakfasts and lunches and Friday evening meal (some people like to go out to eat in Grafton after unloading). The bad news is, you have to wash your own dishes.

**Saturday night cookout:** Volunteers will prepare a delicious meal with both meat and vegetarian alternatives. Chef Bob Larson will work his magic at the barbecue grill again this year. We could use some extra hands in the kitchen in the afternoon. Eat at 5:30 p.m.

**Entertainment:** Gather around a campfire, roast marshmallows and make s'mores on Saturday night. Bring guitars, banjos, harmonicas and other acoustic instruments!

### OTHER INFORMATION

**Bring:** Bicycles, cameras, books, binoculars, day packs, rain gear, water bottles, flashlights, musical instruments, breakfast and lunch supplies and other beverages, if desired.

**Don't bring:** Guns, radios or pets. Tent camping is prohibited.

**Cost:** Only \$6 per person per night for the cabins and \$12 per person for the Saturday night meal (\$7 for children under 10).

**To register:** Fill out the form on the opposite page and mail it with payment by Monday, Oct. 3.

# CALENDAR

**Saturday, Sept. 10 Alton citywide fall litter cleanup.** Sierra Club members will meet at 9 a.m. at the downtown registration station, 200 W. Third St. (Third and Belle). Rain or shine. Free gloves and bags.



Free gloves and bags.

For more information, call (618) 465-3026.

**Sunday, Sept. 11 Piasa Palisades Group full moon hike** at Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville (Google map N38 49.021 W89 58.455). Leisurely, 1-mile walk, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend, bug spray and water, if desired. For more information, call Virginia Woulfe-Beile at (618) 977-2319.

**Monday, Sept. 12 Piasa Palisades Group monthly meeting** (see related article). Amy Funk of the Metro East Citizens Air Quality Project will be the guest speaker. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in the community room of First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton. For more information, call (618) 462-6802.

**Wednesday, Sept. 14 Piasa Palisades Group monthly bike ride.** Explore the newest section of Missouri's Katy Trail, through bottomland forests with great views of the Missouri River. Cover 14 miles on a basically flat, pea-gravel trail. Leisurely pace. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Black Walnut Road trailhead (Google map N38 52.438) or caravan from the Sierra Club office in Alton, beginning at 6 p.m. Helmet and light required. Call in case of bad weather/flooding if you are not on our outings

listserv. For more information, contact Jim Bensman at (618) 463-0714 or jbensman1@charter.net.

**Saturday, Sept. 17 Mississippi Earthtones Festival** at Riverfront Park in Alton (see related article). River clean-up, vendor booths, live

music, storytelling, bike and Segway rides, painting and photography contests, climbing wall, children's activities, food and drink. For more information, call the Sierra Club office in Alton at (618) 462-6802.

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## WEEKEND IN THE WOODS REGISTRATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**NUMBER OF CABIN CAMPERS:**

Friday	Saturday	Total	Cost
_____	_____	_____	X \$6 _____

**SATURDAY EVENING COOKOUT:**

	Number of people		
Meat/veggie (circle one)	_____	X \$12	_____
Children under 10	_____	X \$7	_____

**GRAND TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with payment by Monday, Oct. 3, to:  
Weekend in the Woods, 440 W. Union St., Edwardsville, IL 62025  
Directions and a map can be sent on request.

# CALENDAR

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## NON-SIERRA CLUB ACTIVITIES

**Thursday, Sept. 8 and 22 Guided walks at Heartland Prairie**, across Illinois 140 from Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Sponsored by The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Begin at 6 p.m. and walk about an hour. Easy terrain. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Light refreshments served afterward. For more information, call Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

**Saturday, Sept. 17 Heartland Prairie volunteer work day**, across Illinois 140 from Gordon Moore Park. Sponsored by the Nature Institute in Godfrey. Hours are 9 a.m. to noon. Followed by potluck picnic and leisurely walk. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes. Bring cutting tools and weeders. For more information, call Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

## AIR

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sulfur dioxide, which exacerbates respiratory conditions such as asthma and emphysema.”

Funk holds a bachelor's degree in public affairs with a concentration in environmental science and a master's in public administration. She has a long history of environmental activism and community empowerment.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 12, in the community room of First Unitarian Church, 110 E. Third St. (Third and Alby) in Alton.

Everyone is invited to join the speaker for dinner at Bossanova, 112 W. Third St. in Alton.

**Saturday, Sept. 24 Prairie program at Watershed Nature Center** in Edwardsville. What makes a prairie a prairie? Learn about plants and animals that call it home. Hours are 10 a.m. to noon. For more information, call (618) 692-7578.

**Saturday, Sept. 24 Workshop on Creating an Outdoor Wood Fire Grill and Cooking with Culinary Herbs** at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. Learn how to make rosemary flatbreads, meals in Dutch ovens using fresh herbs, herb-infused oils and vinegars and a grill from “found” materials, such as river stones and a cob mixture. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. Cost is \$35. To register, call (618) 466-5004 or visit [www.lavistaelc.org](http://www.lavistaelc.org).

**Saturday, Sept. 24 Autumn Equinox Celebration** with a screening of the film “Journey of the Universe” at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. Hours are 2 to 4 p.m. Free. Donations appreciated. For more information, call (618) 466-5004 or visit [www.lavistaelc.org](http://www.lavistaelc.org).

**Saturday, Oct. 1 Edible and Medicinal Native Plant Workshop** at Heartland Prairie, across Illinois 140 from Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Led by a master naturalist and master gardener. Sponsored by The Nature Institute in Godfrey. R.S.V.P. by Sept. 24 to (618) 466-9930.

**Saturday, Oct. 1 Workshop on “Canning and Dehydrating: Preserving Food without Refrigeration”** at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. Learn these

time-tested skills and enjoy safe, fresh, local and tasty foods throughout the winter. Presented by Annie Kelley, who has been gardening and canning since 1971. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call (618) 466-5004 or visit [www.lavistaelc.org](http://www.lavistaelc.org).

## WANTED

The Nature Institute in Godfrey is looking for three people to serve on its board of directors.

The non-profit organization owns and manages about 500 acres on the Mississippi River bluff, including Olin Nature Preserve, Mississippi Sanctuary and Talahi Lodge.

It's also involved in restoration efforts at Heartland Prairie at Gordon Moore Park in Alton.

The organization was incorporated in 1980 by a small group of forward-thinking environmentalists, most from the Piasa Palisades Group of the Sierra Club.

Its mission is to “foster an awareness and appreciation of the natural world through preservation, restoration and education.”

People interested in serving on the board should contact Bob Larson at (618) 462-4448 or Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

## FESTIVAL

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and other children's activities.

Food and drink will be available, including beer after 4 p.m. For a complete schedule, visit the Piasa Palisades Group website at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/piasapalisades>.